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March 8, 2005

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

ALIEN TRAFFICKERS SENTENCED

PRESS RELEASE

Susan W. Brooks, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, announced that RAMON VASQUES-BALCASAR, age 22, and ROGELIO MORALES-MARTINEZ, 24, both citizens of Mexico, were sentenced to 12 months imprisonment today by U.S. District Judge Sarah E. Barker following their guilty pleas to transporting illegal aliens. This case was the result of an investigation by the Putnam County Sheriff's Department, Indiana State Police, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

On September 9, 2004, BALCASAR drove a van that overturned on I-70 near Brazil, Indiana. The van held 14 illegal aliens, including BALCASAR and the co-defendant, MARTINEZ. The van was rated to hold 7 people. BALCASAR stated the hood flew open and he lost control while trying to pass a semi-truck when the accident occurred. The van

ended up on the side of the road with some of the illegal alien passengers being ejected. Injuries to the aliens included a broken ankle, a broken nose, a concussion, and severe lacerations to the face and shoulder of one woman. When law enforcement arrived, they noticed the overturned van and three people along the side of the road. They followed the trail of blood into a nearby cornfield to locate 11 more people.

The aliens had started their trip from a house in the Phoenix, Arizona area. Each had paid money to get into the United States and were supposed to pay more money to BALCASAR and MARTINEZ upon reaching their destinations which included South Carolina, North Carolina, Maryland, Tennessee, and Florida. The aliens have been ordered deported by a court in Chicago.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Gayle L. Helart, who prosecuted the case for the government, the two defendants will be deported upon their release from imprisonment. The Defendants will also have to pay \$30,636 in restitution to the hospitals who treated the victims.

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